Useful Tips

for Youth Leaving Care

Developed in partnership by:

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry for Children and Families

Federation of Child & Family Services of BC

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Federation of Youth in Care networks

Emergency Numbers

Emergency	9-1-1 or the emergency service number in your area
Children's Helpline	Dial "0" ask for Zenith 1-2-3-4, or after August 01, 2000 call 310-1234, toll-free across B.C.
Family Violence Line	1-800-563-0808
Victims Info Line	1-800-563-0808

Other Numbers

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

B.C. Federation of Youth in Care Networks	1-800-565-8055
Alcohol And Drug Help	1-800-663-1441
The Facts Of Life Line	1-800-739-7367
STD/HIV/AIDS Info	1-800-661-4333
Tenants Rights Hotline	1-800-665-1185

Look inside this book for lots of useful numbers!!

Phone Book Tips *(for the Telus Phone Book)*

- Local emergency numbers are on the inside of the front cover of the phone book.
- Just before the start of the "white pages" is a list of local services. The list is on pages with blue edges.
- Government services are listed in the "blue pages" that come after the white pages.
- Numbers starting with 1-800, 1-888 and 1-877 are free long distance calls.

Useful Tips

for Youth Leaving Care

Thanks!

... for checking out this book.

And thanks to the people who helped make this book possible.

Ministry for Children and Families

Provincial Reference Group
Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service agencies of B.C., Central Okanagan Child and Family Resources, Federation of B.C. Youth in Care Networks, B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations, MCF Guardianship Branch, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services, Youth Quest

Victoria Reference Group
Coastal Community Services, MCF Guardianship Branch, InterCultural Association of Greater Victoria, Victoria Youth in Care Network, YM/YWCA Supported Independent Living Program

FCFS Youth Issues Committee

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the youth
in care in B.C. - past, present and future.

Welcome

This book is for youth leaving government care. It has useful info to help you on the road to independence.

Leaving care can be really exciting and difficult at the same time. Moving out on your own can be great - but at times you may feel frustrated and a little lonely.

Do you know how to budget? Are you looking for tips on getting a job, or getting a place to live? Do you know how to get some cash from a GST refund? This book won't do things for you - but it will give you some ideas of what to do. Check it out!

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1. How to Get I.D.

You will need the right I.D. to do lots of things, like getting a job or opening a bank account. Here's some info on how to get some very useful I.D.

- Birth Certificate
- Social Insurance Card
- British Columbia Identification Card (B.C.I.D.)
- Status Card

Birth Certificate

If you are still in care, you should have a birth certificate in your file at the Ministry for Children and Families. You can get it from the Ministry when you need it, and you should get it when you leave care. Do not lose your birth certificate!! It can be a major hassle to get a new one.

To get your birth certificate, you will need some info on yourself and your parents. If you were born in B.C. you will need:

- Your full name, and date and place of birth.
- The full names of both your parents. This includes your birth mother's maiden name - the last name she was born with
- The place of birth of both birth parents.

If your parents were born in B.C. you need to know the name of the city. If they were born outside of B.C. you need to know which province, American state or other country.

You can call 1-800-663-8328 to find out how to get a copy of your birth certificate. This number will also give you info on how to get a birth certificate if you were born outside B.C.

The fee for a copy of a B.C. birth certificate is $27. If you were born outside of B.C. the fee will be different. If you are on Income Assistance, you might be able to get this fee refunded.

Certificate of Canadian Citizenship

Are you a Canadian citizen who was born outside of Canada? If so, your Certificate of Canadian Citizenship is your basic piece of I.D. in Canada. If you are still in care, there should be a copy of this I.D. in your file at the Ministry. Make sure you get it when you leave care.

Call 1-888-242-2100 to find out how to get a new copy of your Certificate of Canadian Citizenship. The fee is $75. Press "0' to talk to someone in person.

Call the same number to get a new Certificate of Landing. The fee is $30. Ask for a "verification of admission."

Certificate of Landing

If you are a landed immigrant, your "Certificate of Landing" is your basic I.D. in Canada.

Social Insurance Card

A social insurance card is another really useful piece of I.D. You need a social insurance number to get a job and get tax refunds.

If your name has changed and is different than on the I.D. you have now, you will need an official record of this change. If you are a Status Indian, and you want this on your card, you will also need your Indian Status Card.

You can apply for a social insurance card at your local Employment Insurance Centre or by mail. Your first application is free. It is also free if you have had a legal name change. The cost for replacement cards is $10.

Look on the next page for more info on how to get a social insurance card

To get a social insurance number, you need one of these pieces of I.D.

- a Canadian birth certificate, a Canadian passport, a Canadian Citizenship Certificate or a Record of Landing (for landed immigrants).

For more info call your local Human Resource Centre or 1-800-206-7218.

British Columbia Identification Card (B.C.I.D.)

B.C. I.D. is another useful piece of plastic. It's got your picture on it. You need official picture I.D. for lots of things — like opening a bank account.

To get a B.C. I.D. you will need:

- a birth certificate, certificate of Canadian citizenship or record of landing,

plus

- another piece of I.D. that has your signature and your printed name, like a passport, bank card, or health card.

You can get a B.C. I.D. at your local Driver's Services Centre. It will cost you $35.

To find the nearest Driver's Services Centre, call 1-800-663-7867.

Status Card

In Canada, Status Indians get some benefits like not having to pay some taxes. A Status Card is an easy way to show that you are "status." If you are already a Registered Status Indian, then you can apply for a Status Card through any First Nation Band Office or Regional Office of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

If you are in care and don't know whether or not you are "status," your Ministry worker is responsible for finding out for you. Your social worker is also responsible to help you get registered if you are status.

To find the nearest place to apply for a status card, call Indian Affairs and Northern Development in Vancouver at (604) 666-7891. Or call the B.C. Association of Friendship Centres at 1-800-990-2432.

2. Money

How much money you've got coming in makes a big difference in the choices you have. A budget is a tool to help you organize your money. On the next page, there are three different budgets.

Look at the difference some extra money makes! On income assistance you're just getting by. With a minimum wage job you can get your own place to live, spend a bit more on fun and save a little cash. If you have a full-time job at $10 an hour you can get a bigger place, cable TV - and still have some cash left over for fun and savings.

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Monthly Budget: BC Benefits

Income	**500**

Expenses		
Housing	room or shared apt.	325
	phone	30
Food	groceries	100
Personal Needs	medicine, soap, toothpaste, clothes, haircuts	20
Laundry	soap, washing, drying	15
Other		10
Total Expenses		**500**

Total Income	500
Total Expenses	500
Savings	**0**

Monthly Budget: Working 35 hrs/week, $7.15/hour

Income (after taxes etc!)	**800**

Expenses		
Housing	bachelor suite	425
	light	20
	phone	30
Food	groceries	110
	meals in restaurants	25
Transport	bus pass	50
Recreation	movies, arcade	25
Personal Needs	clothes, medicine, soap, toothpaste, haircuts	40
Laundry	soap, washing, drying	20
Gifts		10
Other		23
Total Expenses		**778**

Total Income	800
Total Expenses	778
Savings	**22**

These are sample budgets — costs may vary.

Start-Up Costs

When you rent a place, you often have to pay a **damage deposit** of half a month's rent. You will get your deposit back when you leave - if there is no damage to the place.

When you get your own place, you might also have to buy furniture, pots and pans, etc.

Monthly Budget: BC Benefits

Income		**500**
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How Much Will It Cost?

How much will it cost to live in your own place? Here's a form to help you figure it out. It includes start-up costs and things you might spend money on every month.

Expenses		Start-Up Costs	Regular Monthly Expenses
Housing	rent, damage deposit, hydro, gas/oil, phone, furniture, kitchen supplies, cleaning supplies		
Food	groceries, meals out		
Transport-ation	bus/transit pass, taxi, car payments, car insurance, gas		
Recreation	movies, concerts, sports, travel		
Personal Care	medicine, soap, shampoo, make up		
Clothing			
Laundry			
Gifts			
Child Care	babysitting/day care, diapers		
Other			
Totals For Start-Up And Monthly Expenses		=	=

Start-Up Costs	
Plus Monthly Expenses	+
Total Expenses for First Month	=

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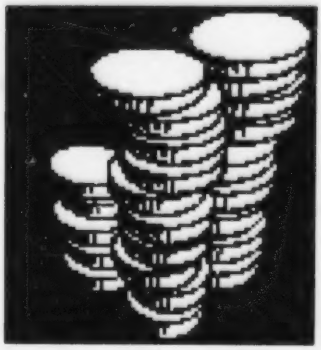
Laundry			
Gifts			
Child Care	babysitting/day care, diapers		
Other			
Totals For Start-Up And Monthly Expenses		=	=

Start-Up Costs	
Plus Monthly Expenses	+
Total Expenses for First Month	=

Banking



Most people keep their money in a bank or credit union. An account at a credit union or bank helps you keep track of your money and keep it safe.

Opening an Account

To open an account, you need one piece of picture I.D. (B.C.I.D., driver's license or passport) and one other piece of official I.D. (birth certificate, social insurance number, care card, etc.). Of course, you also need some money to put in the account. You will have some choices to make when you are opening your account. Here's some info to help you.

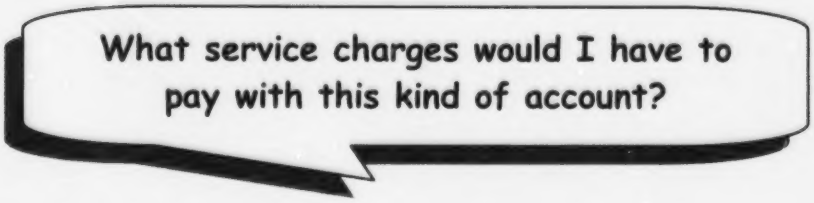
Choosing a Bank or Credit Union

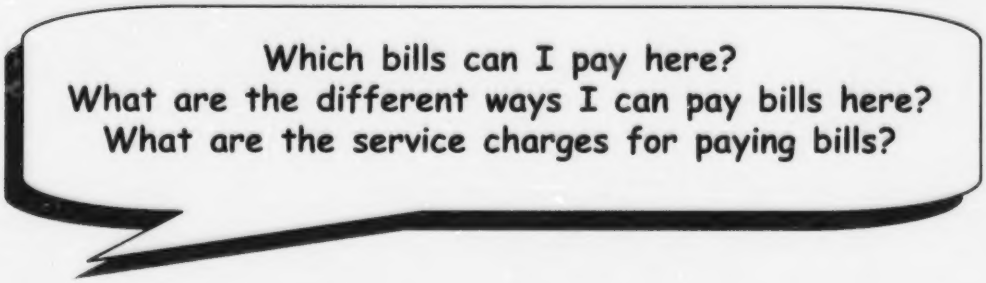
Shop around to decide which bank or credit union is best for you. Here are some questions to help you get some info to help you choose.

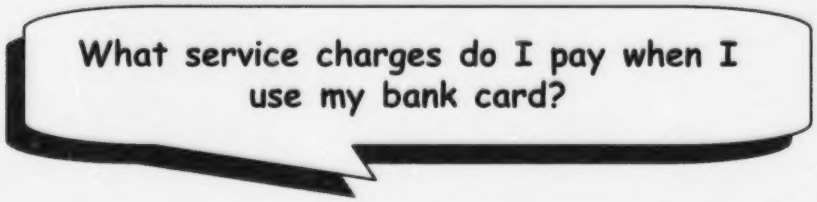
What kind of chequing and savings accounts do you have?

How much is the minimum deposit for opening an account?

How can I make deposits and withdrawals with this kind of account?







Credit

There are two basic ways to buy something - cash and credit. When you use cash or your bank card to pay, the money leaves your hand or your bank account when you buy something. If you use credit, like a credit card or "lay-away plan", you are promising to pay later for some or all of something. Think twice before using credit to buy things!

Sometimes it's hard to pay for something after you have it. And sometimes you get charged interest. That means you end up paying more money when you use credit than when you use cash or your bank card.

3 Ways to Cash a Cheque without an Account

1. Take photo ID and the cheque to the bank on the cheque.

2. Ask a friend with an account to cash it for you. After you sign the back of the cheque your friend can cash it.
   ** Only do this with someone you trust! They could keep the money once you give them the signed cheque. And only do this if you're sure the cheque won't bounce. If the cheque bounces and your friend has already given you the cash, you will have to pay your friend back!

3. Go to a cheque cashing store. These places charge you a fee for cashing your cheque. You will need photo ID.

The best plan is to get yourself an account!! It will cost less to cash a cheque at a bank than at a cheque cashing store. Plus, you won't have to carry a lot of cash around with you - carrying a lot of cash makes it easy to spend, lose or get stolen.

Free Help Doing Your Income Tax

Every year in March and April, volunteers help thousands of people do their income tax. **To get free help with your tax return call Revenue Canada at 1-800-959-8281.**

Tax Tips

Knowing how taxes work can help put some extra cash in your pocket. Here's some info on:

- $ Income Tax
- $ GST Refunds
- $ National Child Benefit

Income Tax

You can pick up income tax forms at any post office. You use these forms to record how much money you made last year, how much tax you have to pay - and how much tax and benefits you will get back! You should file your taxes every year. If you haven't filed your taxes for a few years, you can file for up to three years ago to get any benefits coming to you (like tax refunds or child benefit).

It's worth doing your taxes because a lot of young people get money back after sending in the

Make sure you let Revenue Canada know your new address if you move before you get your income tax or GST refund.

Look for Revenue Canada in the blue pages of the phone book under Government of Canada.

You can get refunds and benefits from Revenue Canada by mail. You can also get benefits and refunds deposited directly into your bank account.

forms. If you owe money for income tax, the law says that you have to file a tax return.

The deadline for doing your taxes for the last calendar year is April 30. If you owe money for income tax, you will get charged interest if you pay after April 30.

If you had a job last year, you will need a "T-4" form to do your income tax. If you don't get a T-4 in the mail from your employer, call and ask them to send you one.

GST Refunds

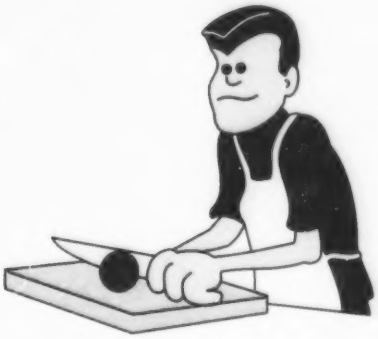
GST refunds give back a little of the money you pay in tax when you buy things. You can apply for a GST refund if you were 19 or older at the end of last year. Apply for GST refunds when you do your income tax return. For more info on GST refunds, call Revenue Canada at 1-800-959-8281.

Canada Child Tax Benefit

The Canada Child Tax Benefit gives cash to parents who don't earn a lot of money. This cash can really help out! But to get it, you have to file your income tax!

If you need more information about the Canada Child Tax Benefit, call Revenue Canada toll free 1-800-387-1193.

Some youth in care have money kept for them "in trust" by the Public Trustee until they turn 19. Ask your Ministry worker if there is any money in trust for you.



3. Jobs

Having a job really helps pay the bills, and it helps you save for the things you want to buy. Doing a job well can also make you feel good about yourself.

Job Options

You don't always have much choice when you're looking for a job - sometimes you have to take any work you can get. But it is worth thinking about what kind of work you want to do. Doing something you like will help you keep your job and do it well.

For help finding a job, get in touch with your local Human Resources Centre. They can tell you where to get help with a resume, and they have lists of job openings.

- Look in the Government of Canada section of the Blue Pages in the phone book or call 1-800-667-3355

What kind of person are you? Check the things you would like in a job.

❑ working alone	❑ working with people	❑ working with a team
❑ working inside	❑ working outside	❑ close supervision
❑ having freedom	❑ moving around	❑ sitting/standing still
❑ using tools	❑ using numbers	❑ handling money
❑ helping people	❑ solving problems	❑ being accurate

Career planning is looking ahead and deciding what kind of work you want to do down the road. You can get help with career planning from high school counsellors, Human Resource Centres and on the internet (try http://www.youth.gov.bc.ca).

How to Look for a Job

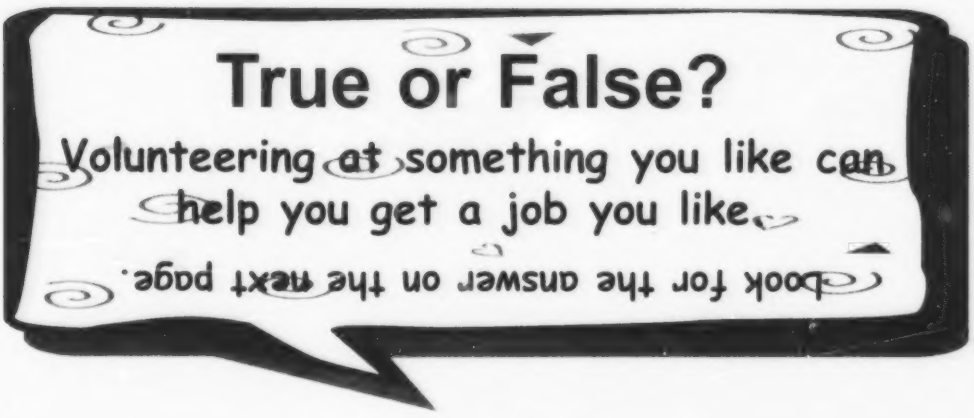
Before you can apply for a job, you have to find a job opening. Here are some ways to find out where the jobs are.

- **Ask Around**

Ask people if they know of any job openings. Ask friends, family, youth workers, business owners, people you meet on the street. A lot of jobs are never advertised and are filled by word of mouth.

- **Newspaper Ads**

Look in the classified ads in newspapers. You can check out the papers at your public library.



- **Human Resource Centres**

  These centres have computer banks of work available. They can also tell you about any job-finding programs in your area.

- **Signs**

  Look for "help wanted" signs in windows. Check out bulletin boards in community centres, laundromats and grocery stores. You can also put up your own signs in these places to let people know what kind of work you're looking for. Some people have even turned their resumes into big posters and worn them around town. It works!

- **Volunteer**

  You can help out with a community organization, or even work for free for a business for a while. It's an excellent way to get skills, experience and contacts that will help you find a job.

BC's Youth Employment Programs can also help you get a job. Call 1-877-BC-YOUTH (1-877-229-6884) for info on programs in your area.

There are job programs for:

- **Aboriginal youth**
- **youth on income assistance**
- **street youth**
- **youth into the environment**
- **youth into computers**
- **youth into science and technology**
- **writing resumes**
- **... and more!**

How to Get a Job

Once you've found a job you're interested in, you have to get the person hiring for the job interested in you. You have to help them see that you're the right person for the job.

* Make a Resume

A resume tells people about you. In most parts of B.C. you can get free help making a resume. Look for Human Resource Centre in the Blue Pages of the phone book. Give them a call and ask where you can get help with a resume in your area. You can also call Youth Options B.C. at 1-877-BC-YOUTH (1-877-229-6884) to find some help with your resume.

* Write Cover Letters

Send a "cover letter" with your resume when you apply for a job. Keep it short (one page at the most). In the cover letter, you can add any extra info that is not in your resume. Some people even offer to work for free for a few days to let the boss see that they are good workers.

Sample Resume

Jane Ayouth
Apt. 12, 3456 Quiet Street
Anytown, BC V9Z 1Z9
987-6543

Employment Objective

To enter the food services field.

Education

Diploma
Anytown High School, 1999

Training

Food Safe Certificate, 1998
Super Host Certificate, 1999

Skills

- ✓ Working Under Pressure
- ✓ Cash Register Operation
- ✓ Communicating with Customers

Work and Volunteer Experience

- ✓ Waiter — January - April, 1999
  Cozy Cafe
- ✓ Ticket Taker — May 18 - 24, 1999
  Littletown Drama Festival — (Volunteer Position)
- ✓ Cook — June - July, 1998
  Jack's Chip Stand

References Available on Request

* **Get References**

References are people who will put in a good word for you when you're looking for a job. Employers check references to make sure you are OK. Try to get references who are respected members of your community, like people you have worked for, teachers or youth workers. Don't use your friends or family as references.

* **Practice Filling Out Application Forms**

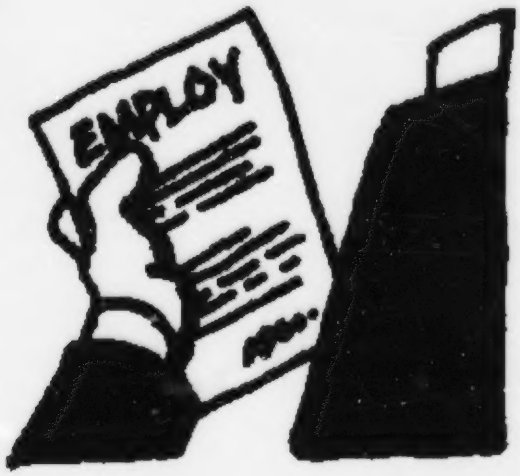
Sometimes you need to fill out a form to apply for a job. The info you need to put on a form is mostly the same as what you have on your resume. Fill in the form carefully. If you make a mistake, ask for another form - don't make a mess crossing things out.

* **Look Good**

It might not be fair, but people will judge you by how you look. When you go out looking for work, make sure you are clean and dressed neatly - even if you're just picking up an application form. If you get an interview, try to check out how others look at the work place - then dress to fit in.

Some Common Interview Questions

1. Tell me why you applied for this job.
2. Tell me something about your previous work experience.
3. What do you know about this company/ organization?
4. How would you describe yourself?
5. How well do you work under pressure?
6. What skills or talents do you have to offer this company/ organization?
7. What do you think you will be doing in five years?
8. What are some of your strengths and weaknesses?



* **Get Ready for Interviews**

A job interview is a big step in your job search. The boss is taking the time to meet you and see if you're right for the job. It's up to you to make a good impression. Before the interview, think how to answer the questions the boss might ask.

An interview is also a chance for you to ask questions. If the boss doesn't tell you about the hours or pay, you can ask about it at the end of the interview.

You can practice an interview with someone you trust. Your friend is the boss and asks you questions just like in a real interview. Try to be serious but have some fun too! When you are done, talk about how the "interview" went. Trying this a few times will make you ready when its time for the real interview.

Make sure you're looking good when you go to an interview. Take a list of your references. Then go for it! It's your chance to shine.

How to Keep a Job

Getting a job is only half the deal. Once you've got one, you've got to keep it. Getting fired can feel bad. It can also make it harder to find another job. There are some basic things that you need to be successful in any job.

Check off the job skills you already have. It will pay to work on the ones you don't check.

- ❑ **being on time**
- ❑ **admitting mistakes**
- ❑ **keeping things tidy**
- ❑ **dealing with frustration**
- ❑ **following instructions**
- ❑ **learning from mistakes**
- ❑ **cooperating with others**
- ❑ **getting things done**

Your Rights

You have the responsibility to do a job well. You also have rights as a worker. For example, in most jobs in B.C. you have the right to make at least $7.15 an hour. In most jobs, you also have the right to breaks for meals and paid "coffee breaks." You also have the right to a work place free of racism, homophobia and sexual harassment.

To find out more about your rights as a worker, call Employment Standards at 1-800-663-3316.

4. *Independent Living*

Independent Living is a program to help youth in care, aged 16 or older, to become more independent. To go on Independent Living, you and your Ministy worker will need to put together a plan for your independence.

You and your Ministry worker will need to put your plan for independence in writing. You will want to include in your plan what services will help you with your education or employment, your health, and anything else that will help you live safely and more independently.

Important
To go on Independent Living, you must have the approval of your Ministry worker.

Independent Living is administered through your social worker, and includes the following:

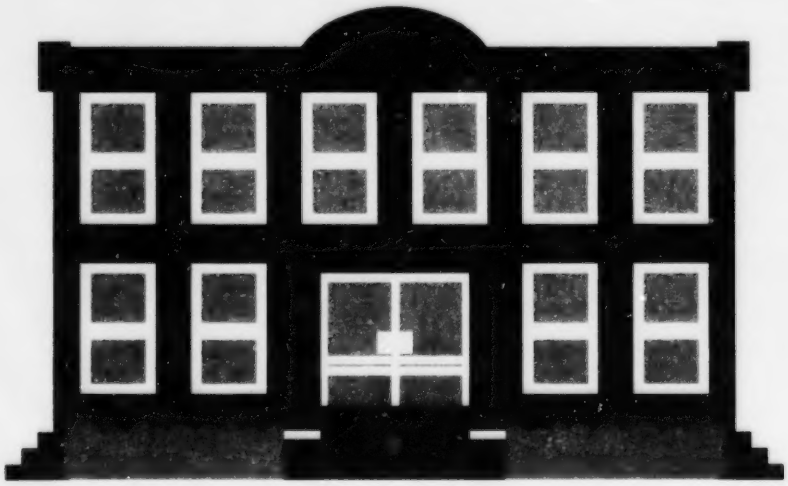
- Basic living expenses (rent and food etc.)
- A bus pass
- Clothing

ARE YOU CONFUSED?

Sometimes people mix up independent living, youth agreements and BC Benefits. Youth in care can be supported on "Independent Living." If your friend gets a different amount of money than you, it might be because they are on a different program.

5. School

Do you want to get more education? Getting a good education is basic to getting a good job. Both skills and diplomas can help you get the kind of work you want.



Do you want to read and write better?

Do you want to finish high school as an adult?

If so, call 1-800-663-1293. Someone at Literacy B.C. will tell you about a program near you.

College and University

Every college and university puts out a "course calendar." These course calendars describe the different programs and how to apply.

Your public library should have calendars for colleges and universities in B.C. Your public library should also have a computer where you can get more info on the internet site of the Post-Secondary Application Service of British Columbia (http://pas.bc.ca/).

If you're in high school, the guidance counsellor should be able to help you out too.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Did you know that there is a scholarship for youth in and from care?! It's called the Ken Dryden Scholarship. Ken Dryden helped start it - he's a cool guy and one of the greatest hockey goalies of all time! This scholarship gives

cash to Canadian youth in and from care going to college or university. To find out more about it, call the National Youth in Care Network at 1-800-565-8055.

You can also find out about more scholarships from a web site of Student Awards (http://www.studentawards.ca).

A lot of colleges and universities also have bursaries for their students. Ask about them - you never know!

Another way to pay for school is to get tuition credit for volunteer work from the Youth Community Action Program. Call 1-877-BC-YOUTH (1-877-229-6884) for more info.

Student Grants and Loans

The B.C. Student Assistance Program has info on student loans and grants. You can call them at 1-800-561-1818. Just remember, you'll have to pay back loans one day!

Services to Former Permanent Youth in Care (SPY)

The SPY Program can help former youth in care or on a youth agreement get funding so they can go to school, get job training or treatment for personal problems (rehabilitative services).

You can apply for SPY if:

- You're between 19 and not yet 24
- And you were on a youth agreement, or a permanent ward, or in continuing custody or guardianship when you had your 19th birthday.

You can apply any time between your 19th and 24th birthdays.

You can get funding to help you...

- Finish high school
- Learn job skills
- Go to trade or technical school
- Go to college or university
- Deal with personal problems that make it tough to go to school or get work (treatment/rehabilitative services).

Ask your former Ministry worker or the nearest Ministry for Children and Families office for more info. You can call Enquiry B.C. at 1-800-663-7867 to get the number for the nearest office.

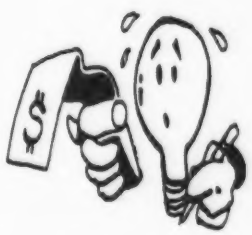
6. BC Benefits (Welfare)

You may need some help with living expenses, as well as help finding work. BC Benefits offers programs, services and financial assistance ($) that can help you meet daily needs, get training or education, or find a job.

You may be able to get BC Benefits if you are:

- not working, or earning very little
- waiting for other income, such as employment insurance
- unable to find work
- working and in need of child care

If you have much money or other investments, you would have to use them before getting BC Benefits. If you have things of value, you might have to sell some of them before you can get BC Benefits. You would not have to sell your car.



How to Apply for BC Benefits

1. Find the phone number of a local BC Benefits office.

The easiest way to find a the number is to call Enquiry BC, tell them where you live and ask them for the number of the BC Benefits office nearest you.

You can reach Enquiry BC by calling one of these numbers:

Vancouver 660-2421
Victoria 387-6121
Other Places in B.C. 1-800-663-7867

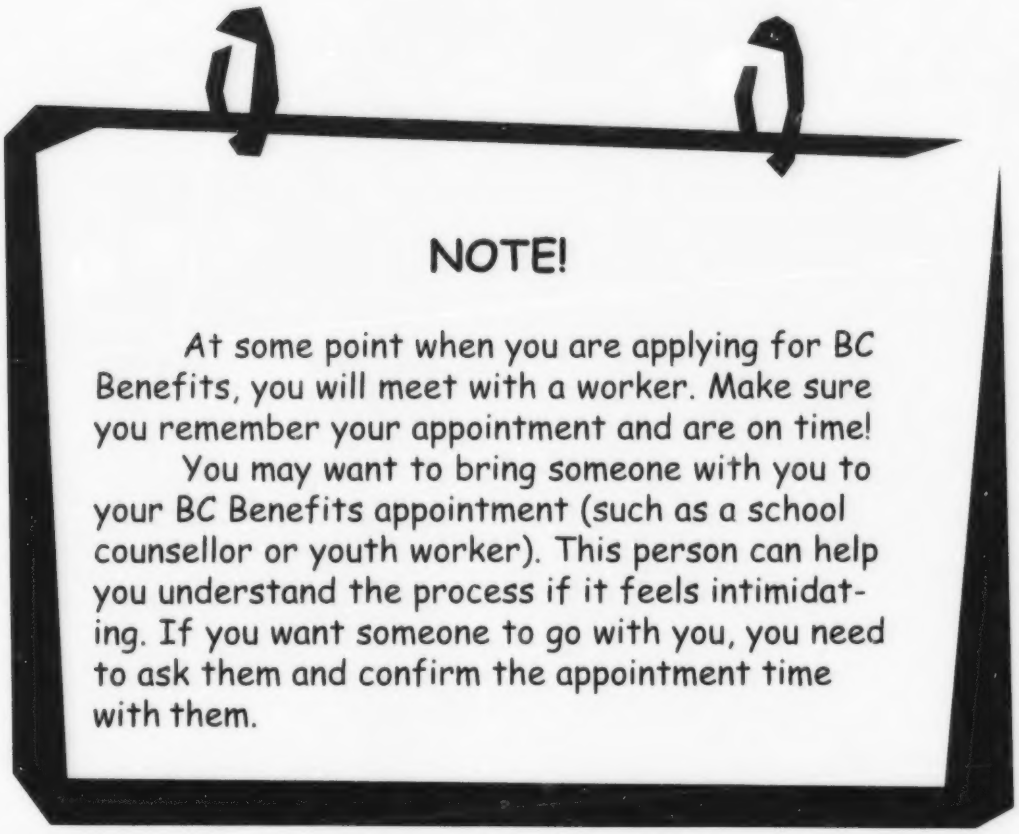
2. Explain Your Situation

Phone the office number given to you, and explain your situation - your age, where you live, if you are a single parent, or if you have a disability. They will give you the address and phone number of the office you should go to, and direct you to a pre-application orientation session.

3. Go to the Orientation Session

Most people applying for BC Benefits must go to an orientation session. At this session, you will see a video. You will get info on:

- the ID and documents you need
- how broke you have to be to get benefits
- other rules for who can get benefits
- work expectations - i.e. if you are able to work, you must start a program that will help you find work
- what to do next to apply for benefits



NOTE!

At some point when you are applying for BC Benefits, you will meet with a worker. Make sure you remember your appointment and are on time!

You may want to bring someone with you to your BC Benefits appointment (such as a school counsellor or youth worker). This person can help you understand the process if it feels intimidating. If you want someone to go with you, you need to ask them and confirm the appointment time with them.

When You Get BC Benefits

When you get BC Benefits, you enter into a partnership with that ministry. In return for help with your finances and access to programs, you must:

- be actively looking for a job or take part in a work training or school program. Workers check every month to see if you are looking for work. Your benefits can be stopped if you can't show a record of your job search or don't go to the program you're enrolled in.
- report all of your income on the cheque stub every month. If you make enough money in a month, you will have to pay back some of your benefits from BC Benefits.

Appealing a BC Benefits Decision

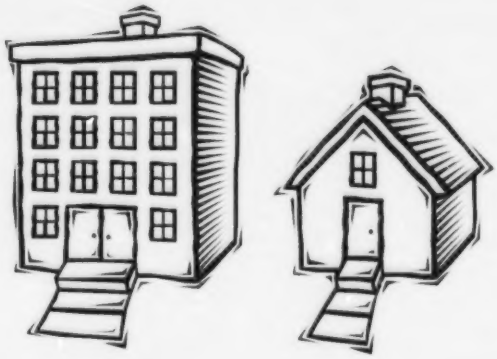
You have the right to appeal a BC Benefits decision if:

- you apply for BC Benefits and don't get them
- a decision is made to give you fewer benefits
- you get cut off BC Benefits

Ask your worker for an Appeal Kit. The worker will fill out the first section, and tell you how the process works and how long things will take. If you need help with the appeal, call the Child, Youth and Family Advocate at 1-800-476-3933.

The appeal process can take some time. A community shelter or food bank can help you while you go through the appeal process. If you need help with food or shelter, the numbers for the nearest food bank and shelter are listed in the front of the phone book under Community Services. The people helping you may need to know who you are, so it's a good idea to carry your ID with you.

7. Housing



Different Types Of Housing

What Type of Housing Are You Looking For???

ROOM AND BOARD
- furnished room in house
- food and utilities provided

ROOM TO RENT/SHARED ACCOMMODATION
- room in a house that you share with others.
- may include hydro, TV and phone.

HOUSEKEEPING ROOMS
- room with cooking utilities (toaster oven/microwave)
- may share fridge and bathroom.
- probably will not include hydro, TV and phone.
- you can not enter the other areas of the house.

APARTMENT, CONDO, OR TOWNHOUSE
- your own space
- usually does not include hydro, TV, or phone

SHARING CAN SOMETIMES BE A DRAG...OR SOMETIMES IT ADDS A LITTLE TO YOUR LIFE!

Deciding What Type of Housing You Want!!

Room And Board/Shared Accommodation	
Advantages: - example: can cut down on costs!	Disadvantages:
Room To Rent/Shared Accommodation	
Advantages:	Disadvantages:
Housekeeping Room	
Advantages:	Disadvantages:
Apartment/Condo/Townhouse	
Advantages:	Disadvantages:

Roommate Stuff

The following check list may help you avoid a roommate nightmare!!!!

Cleaning

- If your place is clean when you move in, it is easier to keep clean. If it is dusty and run down, cleaning could be a big job ... and something roommates often disagree about.
- Who does the dishes (and how often they get done), can often be a problem, especially if you are eating separately, or if one roommate has a lot of friends over to eat.

Helpful Hint:
Making a cleaning checklist can help ... you stay on track and organize the cleaning.

Roommate Romance?!

- Getting involved with a roommate can wreck a good living arrangement. Be clear with yourself and your roommate about your boundaries.
- It's possible that your roommate will date your friends. How would you feel about this?
- Make sure you feel safe around your roommates. Unwanted romantic or sexual attention can make you feel unsafe in your own home!

Having friends over?

- If one or both of you has a boy/girl friend, how do you feel about this person spending the night ... and how often is reasonable?
- If you are a non-smoker, how do you feel about having friends smoke in the house?

4. How are the food and/or household items divided, or is it all separate?

- Some things like dish washing detergent, soaps, and cleaning supplies are difficult to keep separate. You need to decide if you will keep bills or if you trust the other person to buy their share.

How To Use The Classified Ads

Everything is shortened in the classifieds to save space. The following is a list of terms you need to know to understand the classifieds.

H.W. = hot water
D.D. = damage deposit
Ste = suite
lge = large
sm = small
prkg = parking
Res.Mgr. = Resident Manager
Sep. Ent. = separate entrance
B.R. = bedroom
W/D = washer/dryer
Avail = available
appl. = appliances
N.P. = no pets
N.S. = Non smoker
Grd Flr = ground floor
W/W = Wall to wall carpet
bach. = bachelor suite
furn = furnished
L.R. = living room
H.T. = heat
F.P. = fireplace
F/S = fridge & stove
Laund = laundry
Char. = character suite
bsmt. ste = basement suite
Util inc. = utilities included

Pick the ones important to you, so you know what to look for:

Apartment Checklist:

Date of viewing:_____

Rent:_____ Damage Deposit: _____

Location: _____ Address:_____

Phone: _____ Landlord's name:_____

Check the box if the answer is YES!

Utilities Rent Includes:

- ❑ Heat (oil/furnace). If no, $ per month _____
- ❑ Hydro (electricity/heat). If no, $ per month _____
- ❑ Hot water (gas). If no, $ per month _____
- ❑ Cable ❑ Is there a Cable outlet?
- ❑ Laundry If no, are the laundry facilities far away?____ min.
- ❑ Fridge. ❑ Is it working well? ❑ Is it clean?
- ❑ Stove ❑ Is it working well? ❑ Is it clean?
- ❑ Phone ❑ Are the phone jacks in appropriate places?

Total # of checks: ___

What's In The Apartment:

- ❑ Is the bedroom area suitable for you?
- ❑ Is the living area enough for you? (i.e. living room, dining room, halls.)
- ❑ Is the kitchen big enough?
- ❑ Is there enough cupboard space in the kitchen?
- ❑ Do you have your own bathroom? If no, how many people share the bathroom? _____
- ❑ Is there a shower? ❑ Is there a bath tub?
- ❑ Is there enough storage space? ❑ Is it a secure space?
- ❑ Are the door and windows sealed to prevent drafts?
- ❑ Are the different areas of the apartment well maintained? If no, What areas are not maintained?

Total # of checks: ___

Other Stuff

- ❑ Is the lease or rental agreement month to month? If no, how many months do you have to sign the lease for?_____
- ❑ Does the landlord seem responsible?
- ❑ Is the landlord willing to fix things?
- ❑ Is there public transport nearby?
- ❑ Does the neighbourhood look safe?
- ❑ Is the area properly lit for coming home at night?
- ❑ Are there proper locks on the doors and windows and/ or a security system?
- ❑ Is the location quiet enough for you? (i.e. no highway, dogs, neighbours, children, construction).
- ❑ Is the outside well maintained?
- ❑ Is there a smoke detector?

Add any other things you are looking for

- ❑ Other _____
- ❑ Other _____

Total # of checks: ___

Other things that will affect the housing score:

Rate the following statements. The highest score is 5 and means you strongly agree with the statement. The lowest score is 1.

Is the housing situation worth the rent?	1 2 3 4 5
Do you like the place?	1 2 3 4 5
If you are sharing, will you all get along?	1 2 3 4 5

If you have a pet, are you allowed pets at this apartment? If the answer is NO this is not the apartment for you.

Total Housing Score:_____

Note: You may want to add up the score or just use this checklist as a guide for looking for an apartment.

Useful Stuff For Setting Up Your Place

Household Items

- 1 set of sheets or sleeping bag
- 1 pillow case and pillow
- 2 towels and face cloths
- alarm clock
- dish towel and rag
- plates, bowls, cups
- frying pan
- pot with lid
- cutlery
- can/bottle opener
- sharp knife

Cleaning Supplies

- all purpose cleaner
- paper towels/rag/sponge
- dish detergent
- bar of soap
- broom and dust pan
- steel wool
- garbage bags
- toilet paper
- laundry detergent

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER

- remember to keep records of your tenancy agreement and damage checklist and note important conversations with the landlord.
- if something in the apartment needs repair, let the landlord know right away ... so you won't be charged later.
- if you are planning to move out, you must give one month's notice in writing.
- when you move out, it is your responsibility to clean your apartment and arrange for all belongings to be out by midnight.
- if this is not done, you may lose your damage deposit.
- if you are on income assistance, you have to pay back your damage deposit to the Ministry.
- the Residential Tenancy office can give information if you have problems with your landlord. You can call 1-800-665-8779 or call the 24 hour info. line at 1-800-661-4886

How To Get a Phone

A phone will help you keep in touch with friends, find a job and contact services. Here's some info for getting a phone line and phone.

Getting a Phone Line

- Call Telus at 1-888-811-2323
- You have to be over 19
- You need to have:
  - ✓ a social insurance number
  - ✓ a driver's license or B.C.I.D.
  - ✓ your birth date
  - ✓ an employer's phone #
  - ✓ a credit card #
  - ✓ the names of two references

If you don't have an employer or credit card number, you may be required to pay a deposit of $200. If you don't have the money for a deposit, you can pay extra each month... to find out more, call 1-877-301-0101

Buy or Rent a Phone?

You might want to buy your own phone instead of renting one from Telus. Look around... you should be able to get a basic phone for under $20. Getting your own phone will cost more at first but save you money over time.

What a Phone Line Costs

Depending on where you live, a phone line costs $45.00 to connect and between $19.11 and $28.00 per month.

- If you add voice mail, call waiting, *69 etc., this will cost you extra.
- Decide what you need and what your budget can handle.
- You may want to block your ability to call long distance. This is free but if you take it off it will cost $10.00.

How to Get BC Hydro

The number for BC Hydro is in the White Pages of the phone book under BC Hydro. If you have never had a BC Hydro account, you will be asked for the following information:

- **Drivers licence or B.C.I.D.**
- **Date of birth**
- **Employer phone # (if you are unemployed you may be able to use someone else as a reference.)**
- **Address of one friend or family member**

What it Costs

There is a $10 hook up charge. The monthly cost depends on how much electricity you use. Before you rent a place, find out what the hydro bill was for the last renters.

How to Get Cable TV

To find out what cable company is in your area and the telephone number, call 1-877-249-2782.

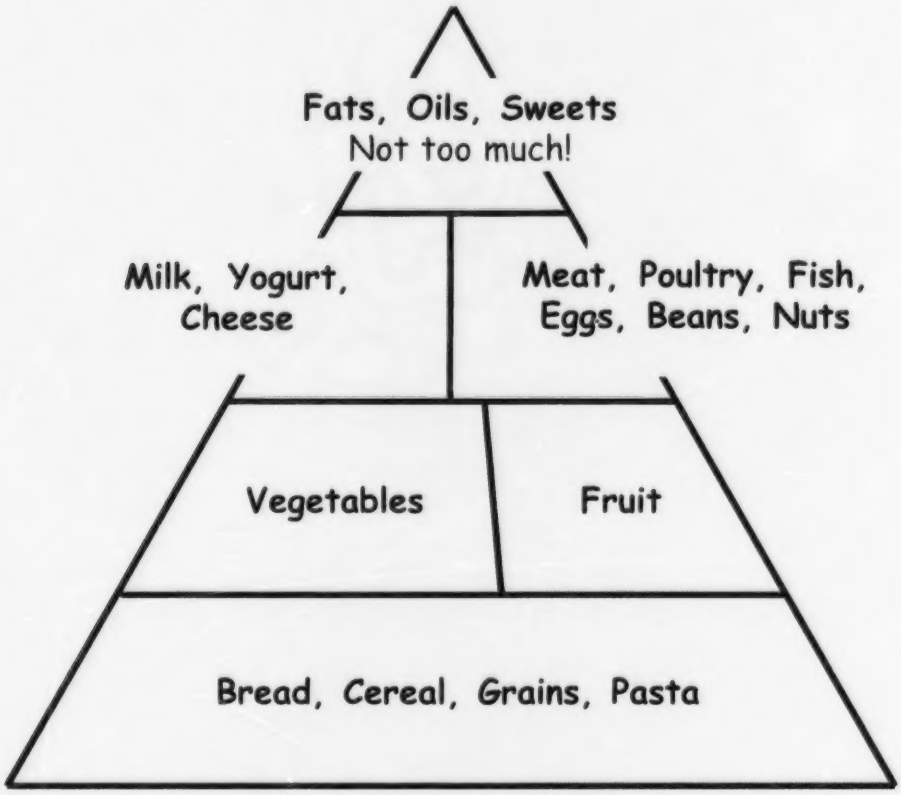
Remember!!!

Don't forget to pay your phone and hydro bills!!!!!

If you don't pay them every month you can end up with a big debt... and ruin your credit rating and make it hard to get these services in the future.

Eating Well And Grocery Shopping

Eating well can be tough on a tight budget. Here are some tips to help you eat a balanced diet.



The Food Pyramid

One way to get good nutrition is to keep in mind the food pyramid. The pyramid is wide at the bottom and thinner at the top. The size of the sections on the pyramid show how much of different foods to eat - lots of grains, fruits and vegetables - some dairy, meats and beans - less fat, oil and sweet stuff.

Important: Nutritional Information

- If you are a vegan/vegetarian, it is hard to get enough iron and B12 and B6 vitamins. A lack of iron can cause you to feel tired and often depressed.
- If you are a vegan, it is often tough to get enough calcium. Calcium keeps your bones and teeth healthy.
- If you eat on the run or live on coffee and cigarettes, you may not be getting enough protein. If you don't get enough protein, your body will start to eat away at your muscle. This can cause very serious health problems.

If you think you're not eating well, try changing what you eat. You can go to a health clinic, doctor or health food store for more info on nutrition.

Hints For Grocery Shopping

- Start learning about what to buy before you move out.
- Make a shopping list - and stick to it when you shop.
- Try not to shop when you are hungry.
- Most of what you need for good nutrition is in the outside aisles of the grocery store.
- The most expensive stuff is usually at eye level ... look above and below to find the cheaper brands.
- The store brand is often less expensive.
- Coupons from the newspaper can help you cut costs.
- Buy day old bread and keep it in the fridge so it doesn't go stale.
- Check the "best before" labels.

8. HEALTH

Care Card

In B.C., a lot of health costs are covered by the government. Your Care Card is your ticket to this health care. You need your care card number when you visit a doctor or go to Emergency at the hospital.

To help cover the costs of health care, there is a monthly fee for everyone with a Care Card. The usual fee is $36 a month. If you are on income assistance or independent living, the government will pay this fee for you. If you have a low income, you can pay a lower fee. You must apply to pay a lower fee. To fill out this application, you will need to have info from your last year's income tax return.

How to Get a Care Card

If you are in care, your Ministry worker should have a copy of your Care Card or know your Care Card number. To check if you have a Care Card number, or to get one, call 1-800-663-7100.

You can also call this number to find out what health costs are covered by your Care Card.

Health Clinics

If you don't already have a doctor, you may want to get one ... or if you need something looked at quickly you can use a walk-in clinic. The number for walk-in clinics should be listed in the telephone book (see section #1). If it's an emergency, you can go to Emergency at the hospital. They're open 24 hours a day.

How To Get A Doctor

It can be a good idea to have a doctor you go to regularly. Finding a doctor that you feel comfortable with may take some time. To begin, ask people that you trust who their doctor is, or phone a clinic or hospital in your area and ask them to refer you to a doctor. You can ask for a male or female doctor.

Once you have the number for a doctor, you have to phone and see if they are taking new patients. If they are, set up an appointment to meet. Have some health questions ready when you meet your doctor. Check the doctor out! Do you feel ok with him or her? Does the doctor give you clear info? If not, you might want to keep looking until you find a doctor you're comfortable with.

Safer Sex and STD's

(Sexually Transmitted Diseases)

A Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) is any disease you get from having sexual contact with a person who has the disease. There are some STD's that you can also get without having sexual contact. For example, when you share dirty needles, infected blood may be passed and result in HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis B.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT STD's?

1. Genital Herpes

Genital Herpes is a virus that causes painful sores around the genitals. It is usually spread by touching an open sore during sex. This virus can be spread when there are no obvious sores. It is important to use a latex condom to prevent the spread of genital herpes.

2. Crabs, Scabies or Pubic Lice

Crabs and scabies are tiny insects that often like to live in the pubic area and can be very itchy. Insects can be transferred during sex, but you can also get them from bed sheets, towels or wearing the clothes of someone who has them. Scabies and crabs can be treated with special creams, lotions or shampoos that are available at most drug stores.

3. HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a very serious virus that results in death. The virus spreads through sharing body fluids such as blood, semen, or vaginal fluids with a person who has HIV/AIDS. This can occur during sex or when sharing needles. A pregnant woman can also give HIV/AIDS to her unborn baby, and mothers can give it to their kids through beast feeding. HIV is the first stage of the virus that later turns into AIDS. If you think you might have HIV, go and get a test. A simple blood test can determine if you have HIV/AIDS. When someone has HIV/AIDS, that person is "HIV positive."

I don't want to know if I have HIV/AIDS. I am too scared to get the test, and I don't know what to do if I find out I am HIV positive.

Having HIV/AIDS is scary. But if you are HIV positive and don't know, you do not have a chance to take drugs that are helping some people with HIV/AIDS. People with HIV do not die immediately ... but without treatment you can die sooner.

It is important to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. You MUST tell anyone you've had sex or shared needles with if you are HIV positive. They have the right to know. They should also get tested!

4. Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

This is not really an STD ... but if STD's are left untreated, women can get PID. An STD can spread and cause infections in the lining of the uterus, fallopian tube and the ovaries. If left untreated, PID can cause very serious damage.

5. Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a sickness of the liver caused by a virus. It can't be cured. You can have Hepatitis B and not know, but you can still give it to other people. Hepatitis B is one of the only STD's that can be prevented by a vaccination (a shot in the arm).

6. Gonorrhoea and Syphilis

These two diseases can be very serious. They used to be called VD or venereal disease. Both can cause pain when you pee. Syphilis can show up as a painless sore (looking like a pimple) on the genitals, but can also appear on the lips, breast or anus. If untreated, it will increase and spread and can cause serious deformities and even death in an unborn child. If untreated, Gonorrhoea can lead to PID.

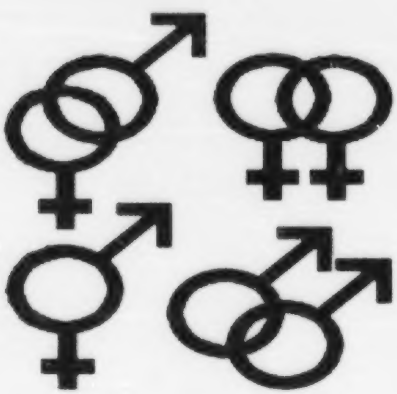
You just never know what this can lead to...
Don't take chances with STD'S

7.Chlamydia

Chlamydia is one of the most common STD's. It can spread silently and cause infertility in women (the inability to have children). It can give an unborn child infections of the eyes or lungs. If you are sexually active, you should ask to be tested for this STD every year.

8. Genital Warts

Genital warts are growths on or around the genitals or anal area in both males and females. They sometimes look like a small cauliflower or they may be flat and hard to see. The warts hurt if they have been irritated.



MYTH: Only homosexual and bisexual couples can get HIV/AIDS.

Fact: Anyone can get HIV/AIDS. It is not a homosexual disease, so don't take chances.

STD Quiz:
Fill in the numbers for the matching STD's.

A. Two STD's sometimes called Venereal Disease (VD).	
B. You get these two from sexual contact and/or bed linen. You will be very itchy and need to get a special shampoo from the drug store.	
C. Which three have no cures?	
D. This STD can be prevented by a vaccination.	
E. This is not really an STD, but many STD's can produce this if not treated.	
F. These appear in the genital area or anus. When on the anus, they might seem like hemorrhoids. If they are severe, you have to go to the doctor to get them removed.	

Answers: A:6; B:2; C:1,3,5; D:5; E:4; F:8

TO AVOID GETTING STD's:

- **Abstain from having sex or intimate body contact.**

TO DECREASE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING AN STD:

- **Always use a latex condom.**
- **Never share needles for drugs, tattoos or body piecing.**
- **Limit the number of sexual partners you have.**
- **Have yourself and your partner tested for STD's**

REMEMBER: Not everything can be tested for! Herpes and genital warts are only obvious when there's a sore.

IT IS BETTER TO USE CONDOMS IF YOU ARE NOT SURE OF YOUR PARTNER'S HISTORY.

These are possible symptoms of STD's:

1. Sores on the genitals, followed by a rash spreading all over the body.
2. Discharge from the vagina or penis.
3. Burning feeling when peeing.
4. No symptoms at all.

BIRTH CONTROL

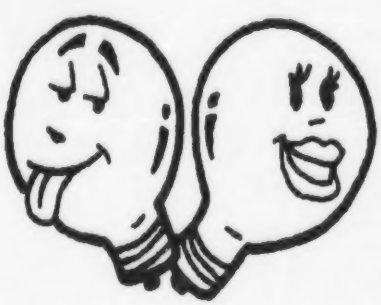
HELPFUL HINT:
If you don't know the different types of birth control or need more information ... remember you can call The Facts of Life Line at 1-800-739-7367

What percentage of people do you think will become pregnant using these forms of birth control?

Form of birth control	Chance of becoming pregnant
1. Condom	3%
2. Diaphragm	.01%
3. Pill	0%
4. Sponge	85%
5. I.U.D.	12%
6. Chance	28%
7. Withdrawal	24%
8. Spermicides	3%
9. Abstinence	21%
10. Rhythm method	18%
11. Implant Contraceptive	18%

example

The answers are at the bottom of the page. How did you do?



Remember! You Have a Choice!
Abstinence is the
Best Form of Birth Control.

Answers:
1) 12%; 2) 18%; 3) 3%; 4) 28%; 5) 3%; 6) 85%; 7) 18%; 8) 21%; 9) 0%; 10) 24%; 11) .01%

IMPORTANT

The morning-after pill can also be used as a form of birth control if you have unprotected sex or if a condom breaks. However, it must be taken within 72 hours of intercourse. If you have had unprotected sex, you can ask about the morning-after pill at your doctor's or local birth control/ health clinic.

Your doctor can help you get any of the different forms of birth control or you can go to the birth control clinic in your area.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE PREGNANT

Pregnancy can occur:

- the first time you have sex
- if you chose to have sex without using birth control
- if your birth control fails

The first signs of pregnancy are usually a missed period ... but you can become pregnant if your body is preparing to start your period and you have never had one.

DO YOU NEED A PREGNANCY TEST???

A pregnancy test kit can be obtained at the drug store if you have the money. If you cannot afford a pregnancy test, you can have it done through your doctor or local birth control/health clinic.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PREGNANCY TEST IS POSITIVE.

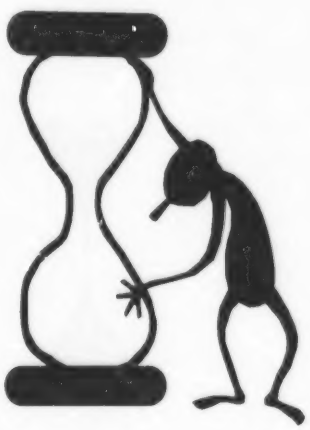
If your pregnancy test is positive and you were not planning on having a baby, you will have to decide what to do...

1) become a parent
2) seek an abortion
3) adopt out at birth

Each of these different options have their strengths and weakness. It may be wise to talk with a counsellor at the local birth control/health clinic or have your doctor refer you. Also, for each of these choices, you will need to seek other services.

IMPORTANT

You need to contact your local birth control/ health clinic as soon as you think you are pregnant ... otherwise you may not have as many choices. It is important to get the proper support and referral to the proper service/resources.



Drugs and Alcohol

Most of us think we know if drugs and/or alcohol are a problem.
Rate yourself to see how you score:

YES	NO	Do you think you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs?
YES	NO	Has anyone close to you ever said they think you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs?
YES	NO	Has your use of alcohol or other drugs ever caused problems for you at school or work?
YES	NO	Has your use of alcohol or other drugs ever caused problems for you with your family or friends?
YES	NO	Has your use of alcohol or other drugs ever caused problems for you with your health?
YES	NO	Has your use of alcohol or other drugs ever caused problems for you with the law?
YES	NO	Do you want to change how you use alcohol and other drugs?
YES	NO	Do you want to cut down on the amount of alcohol and other drugs you use?

If you've answered YES to any of the above statements, you might have a problem with drugs or alcohol.

OR

If you have lived in a family where alcoholism or drug abuse existed, you may want to get some support.

For help or to talk to someone about your drinking or drug use, you can phone 1-800-663-1441 to find the local drug and alcohol resources in your area. They are open 24 hours a day.

Your Ministry worker or family doctor may be able to connect you with someone who can help.

9. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is about liking yourself. Take time to enjoy your self. Celebrate when you have a success! It might be something like staying within your budget, or getting along better with a friend. Or it might be getting through the day when you're having a tough time. Give yourself credit!

Sometimes it's easy to think about the parts of yourself you don't like, but try not to get stuck putting yourself down. You are a special person. It's worth reminding yourself that you bring some special things to the world!

Take Pride!!

List four things that you like about yourself (things you've done for yourself or others, skills you have ... etc!).

1.

2.

3.

4.

10. Stress

Stress is part of life. If you don't deal with it well, stress will make you sick and hurt your relationships. Here's a list of some things that might stress you out. Check the things that make you stressed, and add any others not in the list.

What Stresses You Out?

- moving
- getting a new job
- losing your job
- breaking up with a boy/girlfriend
- starting school
- finishing school
- starting something new
- pain from the past
- getting an injury
- quitting a drug (coffee, cigarettes, alcohol, etc.)
- dealing with your Ministry worker
- getting arrested
- getting out of jail
- fear of responsibility
- conflict with family
- conflict with friends
- other:

  _____

- other:

  _____

And More Stress

Some ways of dealing with stress don't work out well. If you get wasted, you might feel better for a while ... but when you get sober, you still have to deal with what's causing your stress. Getting drunk or high won't make the cause of your stress go away. And you might get new problems because of what you did when wasted!

Dealing with Stress

You can make choices about how to deal with stress. Here are some ways of coping. Check the ones that you use. Circle the ones you want to try.

- ❑ Playing sports/exercising
- ❑ Meditation
- ❑ Taking a deep breath (or two)
- ❑ Going for a walk
- ❑ Talking with someone you trust
- ❑ Starting a hobby
- ❑ Playing music
- ❑ Time in nature
- ❑ Writing a journal
- ❑ Doing something artistic
- ❑ Going to a support group (i.e. AA, women's group, men's group, parent's group)
- ❑ Getting counselling
- ❑ Understanding the source of stress
- ❑ Changing things that cause stress (i.e. leave abusive relationship, start spending money wisely)

Dealing with Anger

Everybody gets angry. What do you do with your anger? Do you hide it? Do you explode? It helps to express your anger in ways that don't hurt you or others. Here are some ideas for dealing with your anger. Which ones do you use now?

- Understand why you are angry (this can include reasons from the past and present)
- Take a few deep breaths to help calm down
- Choose the right time to express your anger
- Let your anger out a bit at a time (so it doesn't explode all at once)
- Tell someone (as calmly as possible) when you are angry at them and why
- Express your anger through art or writing
- Scream at a tree (the tree can take it!)

11. Communication

Are you a good listener? Can you express yourself clearly? Being able to communicate is really important. Read on for some useful info on listening and expressing yourself.

Listening

Some people are naturally good listeners. Others have to work at it.

It's hard to listen well when you're...

- talking
- full of your own thoughts
- full of your own feelings (i.e. sadness, anger)
- too defensive (you don't like hearing what others think of you)

It's important to create some space so you can take in what the other person is saying.

Some Ways To Listen Better

- Don't think you already know what the person has to say.
- Pay attention to the person's body language.
- Look at the person in the eye (*this is not polite in some cultures).
- Repeat back what they say to make sure you heard right.
- Take notes (this can help when you are getting important info).
- Tell someone if you couldn't hear or didn't understand what they said.

Expressing Yourself

Expressing your emotions is an important way of coping with stress. How you express yourself is also an important part of dealing with people and building positive relationships. Here are some ways to help you get your point across.

- ⇨ Think before you speak
- ⇨ Be sober (you might think you're clear when you're wasted but ...)
- ⇨ Get help from a someone you trust to sort out what you want to say
- ⇨ Write down what you want to say
- ⇨ Give someone a note or letter
- ⇨ Get some practice public speaking (like in a youth group or whatever)
- ⇨ Have friends who support your right to express yourself

* **It's also OK to keep your thoughts to yourself, especially if you don't trust someone to respect you.**

Using "I"

When you are talking with someone, try to use sentences that start with "I." This will help you be clear about your own thoughts and feelings.

- ➢ **I felt mad when you** ...
  (instead of, "You made me mad when you...")

- ➢ **When you said that, I thought** ...
  (instead of, "You said ...")

12. Sticking Up for Yourself

Sometimes you need to stick up for yourself. Others might treat you badly or not listen to what you have to say. They might also try to talk you into things you don't want to do. Sticking up for yourself means letting other people know what you need and want. It means making up your own mind and choosing your own path.

Good Friends

- ⇨ give each other freedom to be different
- ⇨ listen to each other
- ⇨ don't always need to agree
- ⇨ aren't selfish - keep each other's interests in mind
- ⇨ encourage each other to grow - even if it means growing apart

If "friends" don't fit this picture - why listen to them? Friendship is a two-way street. Are you being a good friend?

Peer Pressure

Sometimes friends or "would-be" friends might try to get you to do something you don't want to do - or they can try to talk you out of doing something good for you. It can be hard to do your own thing. Letting others push you around can lead to problems. For example, the number one reason people get kicked out of apartments is because of parties. Remember this when people want to crank up your stereo.

Practice Saying NO!

Sometimes it's hard to say no. Maybe it's because you want people to like you. But friends worth having will respect you when you say no. Help them understand that you aren't putting them down when you say no. Be as firm as you need to!

Some ways to say no ...

- That's OK for you, but I'm not into it.
- Nope, I'm not going there because I ...
- No. I don't want to, and please don't hassle me.

You can also say no by staying away from bad scenes. If you aren't there, nobody can pressure you.

Practice Saying YES!

Sometimes it's good to say "yes!" Think of a positive change you would like to make - then finish the sentence below.

Yes, I want to _____

_____

13. Know Your Rights

Knowing your rights can help you stick up for yourself. What are human rights? What rights do you have if you are still in care? What rights do you have as an employee, as a tenant, as someone who receives a government service? Find out what your rights are.

Who to Call to Learn About Your Rights

You can call these numbers to learn about your rights and get support if you think your rights are not being respected.

* **B.C. Federation of Youth in Care Networks: 1-800-565-8055**
* **B.C. Child, Youth and Family Advocate: 1-800-476-3933**
* **Ombudsman of B.C.: 1-800-567-3247**
* **Victim Services: 1-800-563-0808**
* **Tenants Rights Info Hotline: 1-800-665-1185**
* **Employment Standards: 1-800-663-3316**
* **B.C. Human Rights Commission: 1-800-663-0867**

... and Your Responsibilities

Some of the rights you have are basic and do not change. Other rights come with responsibilities when you enter an agreement or contract. What responsibilities do you have when you rent an apartment? What responsibilities do you have to meet to keep a job? Call the Tenants Rights or Employment Standards numbers to find out.

14. Dealing with Conflict

Conflict is part of life. You can't always agree with other people, and sometimes other people will make you mad. How do you deal with conflict?

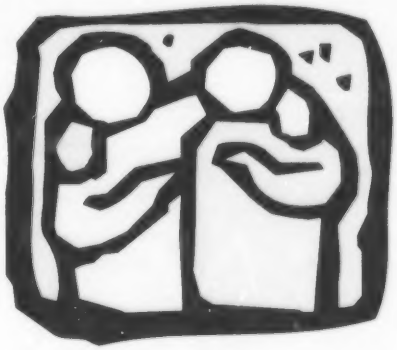
Tips on healthy ways to deal with conflict

- Find stress releases – if you are too stressed, small conflicts can seem really big
- Know your triggers (things that make you angry)
  Take a few deep breaths to help you relax
- Take a time out – walking away and taking time to cool down can help you figure out your next step
- Listen - try to understand the other person's point of view
- Say what you think or feel without judging the other person
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Brainstorm ways to solve the conflict

15. Getting Help

Being on your own doesn't mean you have to be alone. Everybody needs friends and people they can trust. Some people probably help you out in little ways, with a friendly smile or by asking how you are. Others might spend more time with you, helping you with troubles and encouraging you to grow and learn. Think of the people who help you out. Who are they?

- Friends
- Family
- Foster Family
- Youth workers
- Teachers
- Boss
- Doctor
- Counsellor
- Coach
- Religious leader
- Others _____



What Do You Need?

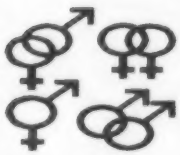
When you want to get help, it's really useful to know what you need. Sometimes everything is confusing. Take a bit of time to think about what you need.

- Food
- Shelter
- Clothes
- Someone who will listen
- Someone who will give advice
- Information
- Encouragement
- Someone to stick up for you
- Someone to have some fun with
- A chance to blow off some steam
- Connection with your culture
- New skills
- Something Else _____

Finding Help

You can try calling one of the phone numbers in this book to find help - and you can check out the phone book for more numbers. You can also ask people you know where to get help. Sometimes it's hard to admit you need help, so you might want to ask someone you trust first. And maybe that person can help you keep looking if you need more help. You can also call the Mental Health info line at 1-800-661-2121.

Everybody needs a hand once in a while - it's OK to ask for help!



Are you gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered? Are you looking for some support? If so, call the B.C. PRIDE Line at 1-800-566-1170. The line is open from 7 to 10 every evening, but you can leave a message any time and someone will get back to you. They will give you an ear and let you know about other people and services that can help you out.

Connecting with Culture

Do you see yourself as part of a cultural or ethnic group? Would you like to feel more connected to your culture? Here are a few contacts to help you make connections.

B.C. Association of Friendship Centres
(for First Nations, Metis, Aboriginal contacts)
1-800-990-2432

AMSSA
(Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. - for contacts with any ethnic group)
1-888-355-5560

The End

Well, this is the end of this book. We hope you have found some useful info inside. Like we said at the start, this book won't do things for you - but hopefully it has given you some good ideas.

Good Luck!